



COUNTY OF KAUAI

News Release

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Mayor: Trip to D.C. was very productive

LĪHU'E – Mayor Bernard Carvalho, Jr. recently returned from a weeklong visit to Washington D.C. where he attended the 81st Winter Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCOM). In addition, he met with Hawai'i's congressional delegation.

Mayor Carvalho met individually with each Hawai'i congresswoman – U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono and U.S. reps. Tulsi Gabbard and Colleen Hanabusa – as well as with Andrew Winer, chief of staff for U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz. Schatz was unable to meet with the mayor due to his full schedule.

"Essentially, I shared our overall vision for Kaua'i and what's been accomplished thus far particularly in the areas of sustainability and renewable energy," said the mayor. "I also asked for their support on several Holo Holo 2020 priority projects, including: the new landfill site and resource recovery park; Lima Ola, the county's green affordable housing project; and The Kaua'i Bus improvements and expansion.

He noted that follow-up letters were sent yesterday to the congresswomen and congressman re-capping their meetings and reiterating his request for their assistance with future grant applications for the county's priority projects.

"It's important that we build and maintain strong partnerships with all levels of government as we work towards shared goals. So much more can be accomplished through collaboration," said the mayor.

During the USCOM meeting in the nation's capital, approximately 1,200 mayors from across the country along with special guests converged to discuss a wide range of challenges facing U.S. cities and counties.

One of the speakers was Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy who talked about the tragedy that occurred on Dec. 14 in his home state at Sandy Hook Elementary School where 20 children and 7 adults were shot and killed. While sharing what it was like to respond to such a horrific incident, Malloy noted the need to take a hard look at current gun laws to prevent future gun violence in the nation's schools.

Vice President Joseph Biden, Jr., another featured speaker, also stressed the importance of amending gun control legislation to save lives. He urged the USCOM to support the Obama administration's gun safety proposals that are now before Congress.

In his speech to conference attendees, U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu touched upon the progress made during his tenure in developing new energy technologies that could reduce America's dependence on fossil fuels. Chu also emphasized that so much more needs to be done and encouraged the mayors to seek grant opportunities to further their specific energy-efficiency projects.

As a member of two USCOM standing committees, Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment and Sports along with Transportation and Communications, Mayor Carvalho participated in small discussion groups on these topics during the January meeting.

"We are working on a couple of initiatives focusing on these areas, which we plan to announce in the near future," said the mayor.

The USCOM meeting also provided its members with many networking opportunities.

"Big Island Mayor Billy Kenoi and I went around and introduced ourselves to each of the mayors in attendance," said Mayor Carvalho. "We wanted everyone to know that we are very open to establishing communication lines and sharing ideas and best practices."

Another highlight of the mayor's DC trip was being part of the presidential inauguration.

“Being there for the inauguration ceremony in front of the nation’s Capitol with almost a million people, and seeing the president, the first family and all the former presidents made me feel so proud to be an American,” said Mayor Carvalho.

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Mayor Carvalho standing with Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy (left) and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel (right).